

WARRIOR MEDIC

MONTHLY

An Army Reserve Medical Command Publication



Military Families Gain Access to Free, Online Tutoring



By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Jan. 26, 2010 - The Defense Department has launched a free, online tutoring service for servicemembers and their families.

The site <http://www.tutor.com/military> -- offers round-the-clock professional tutors who can assist with homework, studying, test preparation, resume writing and more.

Marine Corps and Army families have had access to the program for more than a year. Seeing the value, Defense Department officials decided to expand the service to encompass all servicemembers and their families, officials said.

"Providing 24/7 academic and career support for military families during a time when so many parents have a deployed spouse has been an important and well-received benefit for Marine Corps and Army families," said Tommy T. Thomas, deputy undersecretary of defense for military community and family policy.

"We are pleased to expand this program to all U.S. military families and provide peace of mind that their children are never alone when it comes to learning there is always a certified, professional tutor available to help," he said.

Active-duty servicemembers, National Guard and reserve personnel on active duty in a deployed status, Defense Department civilians in a deployed status and their dependents are eligible to participate, officials said. Along with test preparation, the site is open to students of any age from kindergartners to high school seniors for one-on-one help in math, science, social studies and English.

Many of these students, officials said, are making the most of the live, one-on-one help. "Thanks for having this service when our family is separated at this time due to deployments and training," a 6th grader of a Marine commented. "My father is unable to help one-on-one."

"I really appreciate this," another program participant, a 9th grader, said. "It really helps me understand my schoolwork. It's

going to really help me ace my exams coming up! I am definitely going to use this very often."

Tutor.com's network includes more than 1,800 professional tutors and career specialists who have delivered more than 5 million one-on-one tutoring sessions since 2001, officials said. Each tutor is certified through the site, and all sessions are recorded for quality control.

Related Sites:

Tutor.com, www.tutor.com/military; **Office of Military Community and Family Policy**, <http://prhome.defense.gov/mcfc.html>>

Military OneSource Offers Free Tax Filing



By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4, 2010 - Defense officials encourage military families to once again take advantage of the free electronic tax filing services offered through Military OneSource.

People can access the H&R Block at Home program by going to Military OneSource at <http://www.militaryonesource.com/> and clicking on "Tax Filing Services."

More than 200,000 servicemembers filed their tax returns through this resource last year, officials said.

"We have such a mobile force, and you have folks dispersed all over the world. It's a quick link for the family to link up with the [servicemember]," said Tommy T. Thomas, deputy undersecretary of defense for military community and family policy. "It's a convenience for you to be able to go on that site and file that tax form."

The program is open to active duty, Guard and Reserve servicemembers, regardless of activation status, as well as spouses, dependent children and family members standing in for a deployed servicemember.

STAFF



AR-MEDCOM Staff

Commander, AR-MEDCOM
Maj. Gen. Robert J. Kasulke
Chief of Staff, AR-MEDCOM
Col. Jerrell J. Cockrell
Command Sgt. Major, AR-MEDCOM
Command Sgt. Maj. Roger B. Schulz
Chief, Public Affairs, AR-MEDCOM
Lt. Col. William D. Ritter

Warrior Medic Monthly Staff:

Editor in Chief/Design and Layout/Writer:
Lt. Col. William D. Ritter
NCOIC/Associate Editor/Writer:
Master Sgt. Enid Ramos-Mandell
Photojournalist/Writer:
Staff Sgt. Eric W. Jones

Warrior Medic is an unofficial publication authorized by Army Regulation AR 360-1. This is an authorized publication for members of the Army. Contents of Warrior Medic Magazine are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the Army Reserve Medical Command. It is written, edited and published by the Public Affairs Office, Army Reserve Medical Command, 2801 Grand Avenue, Pinellas Park, Fla. 33782; telephone number 1-877-891-3281, ext. 3730 or 3962; Fax (727) 563-3625. AR-MEDCOM PAO thanks those writers, photographers and publications listed in the byline credits for their contributions to this publication. Their material is copyrighted to their respective publications, and used with permission.

Other Contacts:

AR-MEDCOM HQ, General Inquiries, (877) 891-3281, ARMEDCOM@usar.army.mil; AR-MEDCOM HQ, Emergency Operations Center, 727-563-3635/3949 or 877-891-3281, ARMEDCOM.EOC@us.army.mil; Staff Duty Officer, 727-254-2099.

Participants can e-file up to three state resident returns for each federal return, Thomas said. However, he added, they should ensure they're filling through Military OneSource. People who file through H&R Block directly may be charged for services, he cautioned.

The program is set up for basic returns. People who wish to upgrade to the premium program also may incur charges.

For tax assistance, filers can call a Military OneSource tax consultant from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. EST, seven-days-a-week, at 800-730-3802.

"That's a tremendous service," Thomas said. "We feel it's important to give our military families the absolute best."

Along with the consultants, people with complicated tax returns can visit a legal assistance office on a military installation for more in-depth advice, he said.

Whether online or on base, people should file early, Thomas advised.

"Don't run up against the 15 April deadline," he said. "And when you get the return, look at it as the means to secure your family's finances," whether its paying off debts, adding to a savings account or contributing to a Thrift Savings Plan.

Related Sites:

Military OneSource Tax Filing Services, <http://www.militaryonesource.com/MOS/FindInformation/Category/TaxFilingServices.aspx>>

Military Families Get Free Access to Caregiver Network

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Jan. 28, 2010 - Military families now have free access to an online network of quality caregivers who can assist with everything from babysitting to dog walking.

Sittercity is the nation's largest online source for local babysitters, nannies, elder care providers, dog walkers, housekeepers and tutors, and contains more than a million caregiver profiles, officials said.

Military members and their families can activate their membership by going to <http://www.sittercity.com/dod>.

The Sittercity Corporate Program, funded by the Defense Department, offers military families -- including active duty, Guard and Reserve -- with a paid membership to the site.

"We believe that access to Sittercity's nationwide network of quality care providers will be highly beneficial to our service-

members and their families," said Tommy T. Thomas, deputy undersecretary of defense for military community and family policy.

The paid membership enables military families entry to a custom-built Defense Department Web site portal where they can match up caregivers to their situation; gain instant access to caregiver profiles that include background checks, references and reviews; and find military-certified care providers as well as caregivers who are military-subsidized and authorized access to a military installation.

The site will help meet the unique needs of military families as they face deployments, long hours at work and assignments to remote locations, Thomas said.

"Because of the mobile nature of military life, trusted community resources are often difficult to identify and locate," he acknowledged. "These online tools will help service and family members attain the best match between resource and need."

Thomas said servicemembers and their families can rest assured that they're being provided with top-notch care. The site "links military family members with somebody that the Department of Defense says, 'We've entrusted you to provide this service to our people,'" Thomas said.

"If that military member is out on the front line knowing that the family back home has a sense of ease and comfort, life is good for everybody," he added.

While the membership is free, servicemembers will be responsible for the hiring and payment of caregivers, officials said.

Military members and their families can activate their membership by going to <http://www.sittercity.com/dod>.

Related Sites:

Sittercity, <http://www.sittercity.com/dod>>

America's Employers want to hire YOU!



Are you looking for employment post-deployment? Or a civilian career change?

American employers are proud to support your service to our Nation; they want to hire

YOU and currently have thousands of jobs that require the skills our Citizen Soldiers bring to their businesses.

Let the Employer Partnership Office of the Reserve Components of the US Army be your gateway to these jobs. Go to: <http://www.jobcentral.org/vetcentral/army-reserve-employer-program/> to log on to our portal.

You'll find job listings from more than 800 employers who have signed partnership

agreements with the Reserve Components of the US Army. These employers are currently seeking employees who are trained and skilled in their fields, employees who are leaders, want a challenge, have high ethics and morals and are drug free.

In other words - these jobs require the skills you've acquired with your military service - transportation, law enforcement, marketing, law, accounting, medical, logistics, management, city planners, etc. Whatever your MOS is - America's employers have thousands of jobs listed here!

You may have left a low-paying or hourly wage job when you deployed, and now after the incredible responsibilities you've had in theater you find yourself ready for a new and exciting job.

We understand your frustration and your concern that you will be able to find a position that challenges and inspires you; that pays a good salary with benefits for you and your family; and a job with an employer who understands you may be called away again to serve your Nation.

Let us help you find a new job; even a new career.

What have you got to lose? That new job is just a few clicks away.

Message from the Chief, Army Reserve - American Corporate Partners



Fellow Soldiers:

The American Corporate Partners (ACP), a nationwide mentoring program that provides mentorship opportunities for transitioning veterans and Reserve and Guard personnel is expanding beyond the initial cities in which it operated. ACP is designed to help veterans and military participants free of charge, form valuable relationships, develop key skills, network, and create a career plan. The program is now ready to launch its second phase, which will include expansion to fifteen cities:

Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Norwalk, CT, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Raleigh/Durham, San Antonio, San Francisco Bay Area, Tulsa, and Washington, D.C.

While not a "jobs program," ACP aims to strengthen the relationship between corporate America and those who have served our country, often at great sacrifice.

This program is open to veteran military personnel of all grades, and selectees are matched one-by-one with a mentor according to their preferences. Participants meet for at least four hours every month with a mentor from a participating company.

You can access information about it or apply at www.acp-usa.org <<http://www.acp-usa.org>>. The Web site explains the application process, the companies involved, and how the program works.

Have an Army Strong day, and thank you for all that you do for this great nation.

Sincerely,
Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz
Chief, Army Reserve
Commander,
U. S. Army Reserve Command

First Lady Announces Family Program Budget Boost

By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Jan. 26, 2010 - President Barack Obama's fiscal 2011 budget request calls for a record \$8.8 billion for military family support programs, First Lady Michelle Obama told military spouses today at Bolling Air Force Base here.

The request represents a 3 percent increase over current funding, she told attendees at the Joint Armed Forces Officers' Wives Club annual luncheon.

The budget request will include \$1.3 billion to reduce shortages in military child care and ensure its quality remains high, and also increases funding for youth programs, she said.

Another provision will provide \$439 million to build 10 new Department of Defense Education Activity Schools. This measure, directed by Defense

Secretary Robert M. Gates, is part of a major, five-year effort to renovate or replace 103 of the schools by 2015.

Obama emphasized the challenges military children face, and the need to ensure they're cared for.

"We cannot forget that military kids also serve in their own special way," she said. "They're just like any other child in this country" except their lives are turned upside-down every time their mom or dad is gone halfway around the world, risking their lives so that all our children can enjoy the freedoms of our democracy."

As a result, she said, military children often experience higher levels of anxiety and a higher risk of depression than their nonmilitary classmates, and a tougher time focusing at school.

"So, we can never forget just how much these wars affect our military kids, and we all have an obligation to ensure they have the support they need at home and at school,"

she said.

Based on input from military spouses, the fiscal 2011 budget request also will include \$84 million for spousal career development, Obama said, including tuition assistance and a federal internship program.

Another provision will provide \$14 million in new funding for Coast Guard housing.

"These are all major investments, and they are the result of military families speaking up and being heard," the first lady said. "They are part of a larger, ongoing commitment to care for our troops and their families after the fighting ends."

Obama said her many interactions with military families over the past year has deepened her respect and gratitude for them, and her recognition of "the spirit and strength and courage that our military families display every day."

"You put your own priorities aside. You take care of one another. You take care of this nation," she said. "So, as first lady, I can't thank you enough for that sacrifice, and I promise you that I will use every ounce of my energy to make sure that America always takes care of you."

Obama said she recognizes that providing this level of support network will require "active citizens," as well as the government, working hand in hand.

She said she will continue making it a priority to keep asking all Americans to join in supporting military families. She noted, for example, the "Mission Serve" network she and Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, helped to launch on Veterans Day to bring civilian and military services groups together to help in supporting military members and their families.

"We're asking Americans to engage and support military families any way they can," she said, through job opportunities, professional services, or even babysitting or providing a home-cooked meal. "Our men and women in uniform and their families sacrifice for every single one of us, and every single one of us can do something in return, even if it's as simple as saying, 'Thank you.'"

Attendees at today's luncheon said they welcomed the first lady's commitment to military families one they noted that she has demonstrated continually since her husband entered the presidential race.

"The fact that she's shown such an interest means a lot," said Meredith Simpson, whose husband, Marine Corps Capt. Neal Simpson, is a student at the Expeditionary Warfare School at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.

Simpson is no stranger to the challenges military families face. The couple's 3-year-old twins were born when their father was deployed to Iraq, and they were 3 months old before he met them.

Simpson said she's encouraged by Obama's emphasis on putting military families first and by the example she credits the first lady with showing by putting her own family first. "That's very promising to me," she said.

Related Articles:

Pay, Medical, Family Issues Highlight Budget Request

<[blockedhttp://www.defense.gov/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=57730](http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=57730)>

Obama Reaffirms Desire to End 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell'

By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Jan. 27, 2010 - President Barack Obama announced during his State of the Union address tonight that he intends to work with Congress and the military during the year ahead to repeal the so-called "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law.

Obama said he will aim "to finally repeal the law that denies gay Americans the right to serve the country they love because of who they are."

"It is the right thing to do," he said.

The president has long advocated allowing homosexuals to serve openly in the military, and Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates told reporters in June that he had directed Defense Department lawyers to explore ways to make the policy more flexible until the law is changed.

The law prohibits officials from inquiring into a servicemember's sexual orientation in the absence of statements or acts that indicate the servicemember is homosexual, but allows the services to take action against servicemembers who disclose their homosexuality by word or action.

Gates told reporters in June that he had talked with the president about how to work toward his goal of overturning the policy.

"The issue that we face is, How do we begin to do preparations and, simultaneously, the administration move forward in asking the Congress to change the law" the secretary said.

"What we have is a law, not a policy or regulation," he said. "And as I discovered when I got into it, it is a very prescriptive law. It doesn't leave a lot to the imagination or a lot of flexibility. So one of the things we are looking at is, Is there flexibility in how we apply this law?"

Gates cited the example of someone who's been "outed by a third party," possibly the result of blackmail or a jilting.

"Does that force us to take an action?"

he questioned. "I don't know the answer to that. I don't want to pretend to. But that is the kind of thing we are looking at."

Gates said he believes there's "at least a more humane way to comply with the law until the law gets changed," though he acknowledged that what that way might be is up to legal interpretation. "We have general counsel working on it," he said.

The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law has been in effect since 1993. Previously, homosexuals were strictly banned from military service.

Related Articles:

General Counsel Looking Into 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,' Gates Says, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=54956>

RELATED ARTICLE

'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Repeal Demands Study, Gates Says

By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Feb. 10, 2010 - The Defense Department's review of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law, which bans gays from serving openly in the military, will help to ensure readiness and unit cohesion remain intact if Congress repeals it, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said in an interview aired last night with Greta Van Susteren," during an interview

Gates also discussed the close cooperation he and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton have forged between their two departments during an interview with Fox News Channel's Greta Van Susteren, conducted last week as he visited Rome.

Expressing his personal support for a repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law -- support shared by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Navy Adm. Mike Mullen -- Gates emphasized the need for a full review to ensure it's done right if it happens.

"This is a force that's been under stress for eight years, been at war for eight years," he said. "And I don't want to do anything that makes the situation more difficult for those men and women in the fight."

Gates conceded that some consider the review a stalling tactic, but he called it critical to the process.

"The review that I am launching is to help inform the legislative process of some facts about the attitudes of our men and women in uniform, what they think about a change in the law, [and] what their families think," he said. "The truth is, we don't have any facts."

The ramifications go beyond the level of acceptance within units, the secretary explained. "We need to understand all of the different things that have to be dealt with in terms of housing and benefits, and regulations and fraternization rules, and conduct and training, and so on," he said.

This way, if Congress does change the law, "we can inform that process and offer some suggestions on mitigation if there are going to be negative consequences so we can figure out how to mitigate those consequences," he said.

"And if the law is passed," he added, "then we're in a much better position to be able to go forward and implement those changes in a way that doesn't undermine unit cohesion and readiness."

Gates emphasized the need for a careful, deliberate process.

"The military culture is a very strong one. It's a very different culture than a civilian culture," he said. "These people do not have choices about who they associate with. They can't just up and walk off the job if they don't like somebody that they're working with. And so we have to take all that into account."

Turning the discussion to enhanced Defense-State cooperation, Gates said the tone he and Clinton are setting at the top will affect both agencies so they're better able to partner to address challenges and threats.

The goal, he said, is to use all elements of the interagency process to prevent conflicts from happening in the first place so U.S. troops don't have to take action.

"So building the capabilities, both civilian and military, of governments around the world who are our friends and partners, is key," he said. "And we've got to cooperate to do that."

Gates pointed to the way former U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan C. Crocker and Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, when he was commander of Multinational Force Iraq, worked together toward shared goals in Iraq.

"I think Ph.D. dissertations should be written about the relationship between Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General David Petraeus, because it is a model of a relationship between the senior civilian and the senior military officer," Gates said.

Army Works to Increase Soldiers' Resilience



By Christen N. McCluney
Special to American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Jan. 14, 2010 - Army officials are trying to increase the resilience of soldiers and family members by increasing their

physical, emotional, social, spiritual and family strengths.

"The program is modeled after physical fitness, where you have standards and then an assessment and a reassessment that measures psychological fitness," Army Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Rhonda Cornum, director of the Comprehensive Soldier

Fitness program, told listeners during a "Dot Mil Docs" webcast interview Jan. 14.

Comprehensive Soldier Fitness focuses on optimizing five dimensions of strength: physical, emotional, social, spiritual and family. The mission of this program, Cornum, said, is to develop and institute a holistic fitness program for soldiers, family members and Army civilians to enhance performance and build resilience.

Available now is the Global Assessment Tool, a confidential online assessment that evaluates four dimensions of strength. The test allows users to see their baseline of holistic health, followed by training modules designed to help them enhance their fitness level.

"The modules teach soldiers how to respond and communicate in a more active and constructive manner," Cornum said. "Keeping positive and negative emotions in balance is important to psychological and mental health."

Soldiers are required to do the assessment once a year, but can reassess if they feel their psychological fitness has improved, Cornum noted.

Other elements of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness include mandatory resilience training, and training for master resilience trainers. Soldiers in the master resilience training course go through 10 days of fairly intense training,

Cornum said. They recognize and build their own personal resilience and thinking skills and then follow with five days of instruction on how to teach others.

Cornum said the training is based on the University of Pennsylvania's Positive Psychology Program. Their goal is to teach visualization, goal setting, energy management and coping skills that are military-focused and based on cohesion, trust and accepting as a coping strategy.

She said plans to train additional master resilience trainers and developing more sophisticated online training modules for the individual dimensions of strength.

Beginning this month, adult family members of soldiers may participate in the program. Army civilians will have the opportunity to participate later this spring, the general said.

Related Sites:

Comprehensive Soldier Fitness
<blocked<http://www.army.mil/csf/>>

Program Manager Explains Delay in 'Stop Loss' Claims



By Navy Lt. Jennifer Cragg
Special to American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11, 2009 - After an initial delay caused by software and manpower issues, the first retroactive payments will be disbursed next week to soldiers who were retained on active duty involuntarily under the so-called "Stop Loss" program.

Army Maj. Roy Whitley, program manager for the Army's Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay program, acknowledged problems over the program's first 50 days and said officials are working to reduce the current backlog for the thousands more who are expected to file their claims over the next year.

"We are going to plow through the backlog as quickly as we can," said Whitley, who spoke with bloggers and online journalists yesterday during an Army bloggers roundtable.

"We lost time [by] improving the claims end early on," he said. "For every day we spent working the claims, we knew we were losing a day on development and case management.

"We are building it out [and] improving software. [That is] the reason why you are seeing some delay."

Parts of the initial Web-based claims program, launched Oct. 21, lacked complete functionality, and many of the claims were processed manually, Whitley said. However, he added, the case-management software is expected to be finalized this week, closing at least 1,000 cases. Those cases will then be forwarded to Defense Finance and Accounting Service for payment.

"The latest enhancement gives us the ability to close the cases," Whitley said, and will allow Army claims managers to advise claimants on the status of their claims.

He added that he is working on adding more claims managers to his staff of 14. "We saw the volume coming forward," he said, "and we knew we had to make some changes both on software and personnel."

As soon as the software changes are tested and finalized, he added, his staff will be better able to ease the backlog.

"We are hoping this will knock down on the anxiety caused by our backlog and e-mails," Whitley said. "We are really working through those and trying to focus exclusively on claims clearing."

The deadline to submit Stop Loss pay claims is Oct. 21.

Enlisted Involuntary Early Separation Program



What is it?

In conjunction with the Army's decision to eliminate Stop Loss for units deploying on or after Jan. 1, 2010, the Army is implementing a program designed to identify enlisted Soldiers for early involuntary separation. Soldiers assigned to a deploying unit, who decide not to reenlist or extend under the provisions of the Deployment Enlistment Incentive Pay (DEIP) Program, will be subject to involuntary separation up to three months earlier than their contractual expiration term of service, or ETS, date.

Read More:

http://www.army.mil/standto/archive/2009/12/01/?s_cid=email

VA to Begin Recovery of GI Bill Advance Payments



American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25, 2010 - The Veterans Affairs Department is beginning the process of recovering advance payments made available during the fall 2009 semester to veterans and servicemembers who applied for education benefits.

"The advance payments were a huge success and helped thousands of student veterans during the first days of the historic Post-9/11 GI Bill focus on studies and not their finances," said Keith Wilson, VA's director of education services. "Now, we can get to the business of closing the books on advance payments and focus on supporting veterans for the spring semester."

VA officials will begin sending out notification letters this week explaining the repayment process.

In October, VA instituted an advance-payment process for all eligible students who were enrolled in an institution of higher learning for the fall 2009 term to ensure that all veterans and eligible students were able to focus on their academic studies and not be burdened with financial concerns, officials said.

As part of that process, a Web portal was established to allow electronic submission for advance payment, and advance payments also were made at VA offices around the country.

At that time, student veterans were told that advance payments would be deducted from future benefit payments.

In collaboration with the Defense Department, VA also will notify active-duty servicemembers who may have mistakenly applied for the advance payment of their options for returning uncashed checks or reimbursing deposited funds.

VA discontinued advance payments via the Web portal after the fall 2009 semester. Officials now are processing about 7,000 education benefits daily, up from an average of 2,000 at the beginning of the fall 2009 term, officials said.

As of Jan. 22, the department had processed more than 105,000 of the roughly 132,000 spring enrollments received. Since the inception of the new program last year, VA has paid out more than \$1.3 billion in education benefits and opened the door to higher education to more than 183,000 veteran students.

(From a Department of Veterans Affairs news release.)

Related Sites: Department of Veterans Affairs <http://www.va.gov/>

Defense Department Pauses Spouse Employment Program



By Elaine Wilson
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 18, 2010 - The Defense Department has temporarily halted a popular employment assistance program for military spouses while it conducts a "top-to-bottom" review of its services, officials said today.

The My Spouse Career Advancement Account program, also known as MyCAA, offers military spouses opportunities to pursue portable careers in high-demand, high-growth occupations such as education and health care.

"We recognize that the military lifestyle calls for portable careers, and that military spouses need access to education and training for careers that are portable and high-growth nationally," said Tommy T. Thomas, deputy under secretary of defense for the Pentagon's office of military community and family policy. "This short-term break will allow us to better assess the program to ensure we are achieving that goal."

Officials said they will use the time to review procedures, financial assistance documents and the program in general. The review was prompted by a need to ensure the program is meeting its intent, which is to provide spouses with additional opportunities for portable careers.

Military spouses who already have been approved for financial assistance won't be

affected, and spouses who have an account can continue to use the Web site for career counseling and planning, officials said. However, during this review time, spouses won't be able to create a new account and new applications won't be accepted.

The review will be conducted as quickly as possible, officials said, while still ensuring a comprehensive look at the program.

Nearly 133,000 military spouses have applied for the program since it launched last March, officials said. To date, about 98,000 spouses are enrolled in courses or have been approved for financial assistance.

The program offers spouses assistance with training, job readiness and employment and career services. Through the program, spouses can receive financial assistance to pursue education and training, free career counseling and access to military-friendly employers.

During the review process, officials encourage spouses to explore other government options such as the transfer of the Post-9/11 GI Bill and other programs available on installation and program Web sites. Spouses also can visit Military OneSource, <http://www.militaryonesource.com>, for free consultations on education and training, career exploration, assessment, employment readiness and career-search assistance.

Related Sites:

Military OneSource, <http://www.militaryonesource.com/>>

Special Report: GI Transferability Has Arrived, http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2009/0409_gibill/>

New NSPS Transition Office Announced



The Department of Defense announced today the establishment of the National Security Personnel System Transition Office (NSPSTO) and the selection of John H. James Jr. as the director of the Program Executive Office, NSPS.

James will report to the deputy under secretary of defense for civilian personnel policy and lead the NSPSTO in managing the development of the plan to transition employees from NSPS to pre-NSPS personnel systems. The fiscal 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, Public Law 111-84, repealed authorities for and mandated the transition of NSPS employees to appropriate non-NSPS civilian personnel systems.

He will oversee the design and implementation of an enterprise-wide performance management system, hiring flexibilities, and a DoD Workforce Incentive Fund, authorities granted to the secretary of

defense under NDAA 2010.

Department personnel are committed to proceeding deliberately and cautiously, without unnecessary delay, and with the least disruption to organizations, mission and workforce. Employees will not experience decrease in pay during the transition.

RELATED ARTICLE

Spring to Mark Start of Personnel System Transition

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Feb. 18, 2010 - The Defense Department is on track to transition

the majority of its more than 220,000 civilian employees out of the National Security Personnel System by Sept. 30, more than a year ahead of deadline, the official heading up that transition said today.

The 2010 National Defense Authorization Act called for the termination of NSPS by January 2012, bringing an end to a controversial personnel system that's been operational for less than four years.

The majority of employees will transition -- starting this spring -- back to the decades-old General Schedule system, but with an assurance in regard to pay.

"I am committed to ensure, as directed in the National Defense Authorization Act, that employees experience no loss of, or decrease in, pay upon conversion," said John James, Jr., director of the Pentagon's NSPS transition office. "The department believes in that and believes it is the right thing to do."

This preservation of pay encompasses all employees. For instance, NSPS employees who are paid a salary that exceeds Step 10 -- the highest step under the GS system -- of their pay grade will retain their pay upon conversion, James explained.

An employee's grade upon conversion will be determined by classification specialists using the same criteria in use for GS employees, James said. "An employee's position will be evaluated under the General Schedule system and classified," he said. "If that position classifies out as a GS-13, then that employee will become a 13 when they transition."

While the Defense Department has a goal for transition completion, James noted that each organization and component will make a determination on a timeline based on four factors:

- No undue interruption to mission or hardship to employees;

- Established processes to classify NSPS positions into the appropriate non-NSPS system;
- Existence of a legacy performance management system; and
- An information technology system capable of handling the transition.

As officials work to ensure a smooth transition, they also are turning an eye to the road ahead. Along with terminating NSPS, the act gives the Defense Department new authorities to look at developing a successor performance management system that incorporates the best practices of NSPS and GS.

"One of the best advantages under NSPS that we saw was the clear alignment between employees and the organization about what their contribution means to the priorities and the direction of the organization," James said. "As we develop the new authorities and transition employees to the GS system, in most cases, we plan to reinforce that directive and that effort to ensure the employees are aligned with the organization."

Officials also will examine the law's requirements for hiring flexibilities and a personnel performance fund that rewards employees or teams for their performance, he said.

These processes will continue to be open and transparent, James vowed. "I envision the transition and development and use of the new authorities to be a collaborative effort with supervisors, management, leadership, union partners, labor partners, the Office of Personnel Management and other stakeholders. I see this as being an entirely inclusive process."

James emphasized the importance of communication throughout the transition process and future personnel system modifications. "You can't overcommunicate a change," he said.

To that end, the NSPS Web site, <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/>, now includes transition updates and a training module called GS 101, he said. "Employees who have never been in the GS system, and there are a few, can go in and walk through that," James said. "It really is informative and tells them how the GS system works." It's also of value to employees who were in the system before, he added.

James encouraged employees to continue to ask questions. "Employees should feel free to ask their chain of command about how that process is being implemented," he said. "GS is very prescriptive in how the process works. They will be informed how their job will be classified and transitioned."

Related Sites:

National Security Personnel System
<blocked<http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/>>

New Tax Break for Contributions to Haiti Earthquake Relief



A new tax relief law allows people who contributed in 2010 to charities providing earthquake relief in Haiti to take a tax deduction for the contribution on their 2009 tax return instead of their 2010 return. This means you can receive an immediate tax benefit, rather than having to wait until you file next year's return. Certain requirements apply:

- Only cash contributions made to these charities after Jan. 11, 2010, and before March 1, 2010, are eligible. This includes contributions made by text message, check, credit card or debit card.
- The contributions must be made specifically for the relief of victims in areas affected by the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti.
- You may deduct these contributions on either your 2009 or 2010 returns, but not both.

In addition, the general rules about tax deductions for charitable donations apply:

- You must itemize your deductions on Schedule A; those claiming the standard deduction, including all short-form filers, are not eligible.
- You must keep a record of any deductible donations you make.
- For donations by text message, a telephone bill will meet the requirement if it shows the name of the donee organization and the date and amount of the contribution.
- For cash contributions made by other means, be sure to keep a bank record, such as a cancelled check, or a receipt from the charity showing the name of the charity and the date and amount of the contribution.
- Contributions to foreign organizations generally are not deductible.

Make sure your contribution goes to a qualified charity. Most organizations eligible to receive tax-deductible donations are listed in a searchable, online database available under Search for Charities <<http://www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=96136,00.html>> .

Some organizations, such as churches or governments, may be qualified even though they're not listed on IRS.gov.

Related Item: Publication 526 <<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p526.pdf>> , Charitable Contributions.

CHECK WITH YOUR TAX PROVIDER IF YOU ARE UNCERTAIN OF HOW THIS NEW LAW WORKS.

Call For Applications - Internships for African American males



The Institute for Responsible Citizenship is currently accepting applications for its summer leadership program in Washington, DC. The Institute provides America's best and brightest African American male college students with unparalleled networking opportunities, leadership development, and life long mentorship

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Exposure to congressmen, Supreme Court justices, doctors , business executives, educators, and other influential leaders.
- Rigorous academic seminars.
- Roundtable discussions, including seminars on leadership development.
- High level internships around Washington, D.C.
- Activities that promote strong bonds with each other.

PROGRAM DETAILS

- The program runs from June 5 to July 31, 2010.
- Students must commit to two summers.
- Housing is paid for by the Institute.
- Students work at paid internships based on their career interest.

You should be a college sophomore to apply. The Institute does not have a GPA requirement. However, the median GPA for recent classes is 3.65. An applicant's GPA is not the only criterion that is evaluated during the admissions process. Campus involvement, awards earned, athletics, and volunteer work are also important factors.

The application can be found on the web at www.i4rc.org/application.htm. Applications must be received, not postmarked, by the deadline. Inquiries should be directed to info@i4rc.org or (202) 659-2831. Fax(727)563-3914

Virtual Installation

What is it?

The Virtual Installation (VI) assists military family members who are holding down the home front, far from the nearest military installation, when their loved ones deploy. VI may take the form of a brick and mortar storefront, space in a Veteran's Affairs facility or even an Internet site.

Read More:

http://www.army.mil/standto/archive/2009/12/28/?s_cid=email

Army Selects New Camouflage for Afghanistan



From DoD, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) Press Release

The secretary of the Army announced today that the Army will provide combat uniforms in the MultiCam pattern to all soldiers deploying to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, starting this summer.

This decision follows a rigorous four-month evaluation and reflects the Army's commitment to giving soldiers in Afghanistan the most effective concealment possible.

Soldiers deploying to Afghanistan this summer will receive fire resistant Army combat uniforms in MultiCam, along with associated equipment including body armor, rucksacks, and helmet covers.

The Army's selection of MultiCam for soldiers in Afghanistan culminates phase III of a four-phase plan to thoroughly and deliberately evaluate camouflage alternatives.

The Army took action in fall 2009 to provide two battalion-size elements in Afghanistan with uniforms and associated gear in patterns other than the standard-issue universal camouflage pattern (UCP). One unit received uniforms and gear in MultiCam, and the other in a variant of UCP known as UCP - Delta.

In addition, the Army deployed a team of experts to Afghanistan in October to gather extensive data and photos on the diverse environments of Afghanistan, where soldiers often travel through multiple environments in a single mission, from snow to woodland to desert.

The Army incorporated the information gathered into a photo simulation study it then administered to nearly 750 soldiers who had deployed to Afghanistan. The study asked them to compare six patterns against eight different environments. The results, along with surveys of soldiers in the two battalions who received alternate camouflage, formed the basis for the Army's decision on MultiCam.

The Army will now implement phase IV of its plan for camouflage, which is to evaluate long-term Army combat uniform camouflage options for all soldiers.

Camouflage alternatives represent one facet of the Army's ongoing efforts to improve the Army combat uniform. The Army has made more than 26 improvements to the ACU since it was first fielded in June 2004.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE:

WHY SHOULD YOU CONSIDER A TOUR AS AN ARMY INSPECTOR GENERAL?



Because.....

- ❖ You care about Soldiers and want to help those in need
- ❖ You want to keep our Army Strong
- ❖ You are a good communicator and problem solver
- ❖ You are looking for a change of pace from my usual MOS/AOC
- ❖ You enjoy training and counseling Soldiers of all ranks
- ❖ You are looking for a challenging leadership position that will help prepare me for command or 1SG position

Interested in becoming an IG? Find out how to apply, call the AR-MEDCOM IG, Col. Zieres at (727) 563-3638 or Sgt. First Class Jackson at (727) 563-3832.

We have both officer and enlisted vacancies in HHC, AR-MEDCOM and MARSGs

Psychological Health, Traumatic Brain Injury Outreach Center Opens



The Department of Defense today announced the opening of a 24-hour outreach center to provide information and referrals to military service members, veterans, their families and others

with questions about psychological health and traumatic brain injury.

The new center, which is operated by the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE), can be contacted around the clock, 365 days a year, by phone at (866) 966-1020 and by e-mail at resources@dcoe-outreach.org.

“We’re providing 24/7 support to assist callers with questions regarding psychological health and traumatic brain injury,” said Brig. Gen. Loree K. Sutton, M.D., director of DCoE. “Getting the best possible information and tools, hassle-free, will empower and strengthen warriors and their families to successfully manage what can be confusing

and disturbing circumstances.” The center can address everything from routine requests for information about psychological health and traumatic brain injury, to questions about symptoms a caller is having, to helping callers find appropriate health care resources.

DCoE promotes resilience, recovery and reintegration of service members facing psychological health and traumatic brain injury issues, and works to advance research, education, diagnosis and treatment of these conditions.

“If we need to research a question, we’ll do the legwork and quickly reconnect with callers,” Sutton said. “We welcome feedback on how we can better meet the needs of those we are so privileged to serve.”

The DCoE outreach center is staffed by behavioral health consultants and nurses, most with master’s degrees. In addition to answering questions, staffers refer callers to contact centers in other parts of the Department of Defense, other federal agencies, and outside organizations when appropriate. Other contact centers also refer callers to the DCoE outreach center.

The center serves members, leaders and healthcare providers of the Army, Navy,

Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, National Guard, Reserve and all uniformed services, along with veterans of all the services. The families of service members and of veterans are also served by the new center.

More information is available at <http://www.dcoe.health.mil> <<http://www.dcoe.health.mil%20>> .

New AR-MEDCOM Vision & Mission Statements:

Effective January 13, 2010.

AR-MEDCOM Vision Statement:

“The Army Reserve Medical Command is the Army Reserve’s premier Medical Command, supporting our national military strategy”.

AR-MEDCOM Mission Statement:

The Army Reserve Medical Command provides trained, equipped, ready, skill-rich Citizen-Soldiers, to meet medical requirements across full spectrum military operations.